

Message Text

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11

ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAM-01 DRC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SP-03 SS-20 /079 W

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R 110646Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2155

USIA WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: PFOR, JO, US

SUBJ: INITIAL JORDANIAN PUBLIC OPINION ON PRESIDENT FORD

1. SUMMARY. LIMITED INITIAL REACTION TO PRESIDENT FORD IS MIXTURE OF HOPE THAT U.S. POLICY TOWARDS MIDEAST WILL NOT CHANGE, FEAR THAT PRESIDENT'S PRESUMED PRO-ISRAELI RECORD MAY BE REFLECTED IN U.S. POLICY, REGRET SOMETIMES BORDERING ON DISMAY THAT NIXON RESIGNED AND SENSE THAT ARABS MUST NOW MAKE THEIR CASE UNMISTAKABLY KNOWN TO PRESIDENT FORD. END SUMMARY:.

2. GUARDED REACTION TO PRESIDENT FORD, WHICH IS REFLECTED IN SEVERAL LOCAL EDITORIALS, IS MORE PRONOUNCED IN GENERAL PUBLIC OPINION. THIS IS PARTLY DUE TO POPULARITY WHICH NIXON ENJOYS HERE AND WONDERING IF DEPARTURE OF MAN WILL NOT ALSO MEAN ALTERING CAUSES HE SUPPORTED. IN THIS REGARD, IT IS WIDELY ACCEPTED THAT HIS RESIGNATION CAUSED BY ZIONIST CAMPAIGN TO DIS-

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CREDIT HIM BECAUSE HE LED U.S. TO MORE PRO-ARAB POLICY IN

MIDEAST. OTHER ELEMENT IS THAT PRESIDENT FORD IS LOOKED ON AS UNKNOWN QUANTITY, MOREOVER WITH SUSPECT PAST.

3. PRESIDENT FORD'S STATEMENTS OVER PAST DAYS STRESSING CONTINUITY SEEM TO HAVE BEEN NOTED WIDELY BY JORDANIANS, AND THEIR GENERAL REACTION TO PLEDGE THAT POLICIES WILL NOT CHANGE AND HIS INTEREST IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS HAVE BEEN FAVORABLY RECEIVED THOUGH MIXED WITH "WE'LL WAIT AND SEE" ATTITUDE. PERHAPS OF MORE IMPACT THAN ANYTHING HE HAS SAID IS FACT THAT KISSINGER IS REMAINING. THIS IS TAKEN TO INDICATE THAT PRESENT POLICIES WILL HOLD, BUT THERE IS ALSO REALIZATION THAT ROLE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF SECRETARY DEPENDS ON PRESIDENT'S VIEWS. SOME HAVE MENTIONED IT IS PARTICULARLY OPPORTUNE THAT KING HUSSEIN GOING TO WASHINGTON AT THIS TIME, WHERE HE CAN PRESENT ARAB VIEWPOINT AND EMPHASIZE ARAB DETERMINATION.

4. PART OF HESITATION OVER PRESIDENT FORD IS COMMON VIEW THAT IN PAST HE WAS STRONGLY PRO-ISRAEL. WE HAVE HEARD VIRTUALLY NOTHING SPECIFIC TO BACK UP THIS CLAIM, BUT LACK OF DETAILS HAS NOT DIMINISHED PERVASIVENESS OF THIS SENTIMENT. HEADLINE IN AR RA'I AUGUST 10 MADE THIS POINT: "SOVIETS ARE UNEASY, ARABS CAUTIOUS AND ISRAELIS HAPPY". AT SAME TIME, SOME JORDANIANS HAVE STATED BELIEF THAT NEW RESPONSIBILITIES WILL PROBABLY LEAD PRESIDENT AWAY FROM HIS ASSUMED PREVIOUS STAND ON MIDEAST. THEY POINTED OUT THAT IF U.S. TILTS TOWARDS ISRAEL IT WILL LOSE THE POSITION AND INFLUENCE IT HAS GAINED SINCE OCTOBER WAR AND THAT ANOTHER WAR IT WANTS TO AVOID WILL ALMOST ASSUREDLY OCCUR, WHICH NO RESPONSIBLE PRESIDENT WOULD WANT.

5. OTHER THEME BEING TALKED ABOUT IS THAT ARABS MUST NOW CLOSE RANKS IN ORDER TO LEAVE NO DOUBTS IN PRESIDENT'S MIND THAT THEY ARE DETERMINED TO SUPPORT THEIR CASE AND THROUGH UNIFIED STAND CAN DO IT WITH MAXIMUM EFFECTIVENESS. THERE IS CONTINUED BELIEF THAT ONLY U.S. CAN PLAY CATALYTIC ROLE IN BRINGING SETTLEMENT TO ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT AND THAT UNITY IS ESSENTIAL TO MAKING PRESIDENT FULLY AWARE OF DEPTH AND IMPORTANCE OF ARAB VIEWPOINT.

6. JORDAN TELEVISION HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY IMPRESSIVE IN PRESENTING PRESIDENT FORD IN WAY WHICH SHOULD WORK TO HELP COUNTER LOCAL APPREHENSIONS. IT HAS CARRIED AND REPEATED ALL OF HIS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STATEMENTS (RECEIVED VIA SATELLITE) IN NEWSCASTS. REST OF MEDIA---PRESS AND RADIO---HAVE REFLECTED LOCAL DOUBTS AND QUESTIONING, BUT HAVE ALSO PRESENTED ACCURATELY AND AT CONSIDERABLE LENGTH WHAT HE HAS SAID.

7. AGENCY MATERIALS HAVE BEEN SPLENDID. VOA ARABIC AND ENGLISH SERVICES HAVE DONE FINE JOB IN PRESENTING CONTINUITY THEME. ALSO WIRELESS FILE HAS BEEN MOST USEFUL AND POST HAS SENT MAJOR ITEMS

TO ITS NEARLY 500 PERSON HIGH LEVEL DISTRIBUTION LIST. FORTH-
COMING BOOKS AND INV MATERIALS SHOULD BE USEFUL. IF NOT
ALREADY IN WORKS, REQUEST RAPID PRODUCTION PAMPHLET IN ARABIC
ON FORD GIVING PARTICULAR EMPHASIS TO MIDEAST FOREIGN POL-
ICY CONTINUITY.
SUDDARTH

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